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Customized Job Fairs – A Concept That Works

ESTHERVILLE, IOWA – Iowa Workforce Development Region 3 and 4 has found a new twist to an old theme – that of customizing the job fair concept to a single employer. In the past, job fairs were set up in which many employers had been invited to a single location awaiting the arrival of interested applicants. With the current labor shortage, many of these job fairs have had a poor showing making the effort of the employer disproportionately greater than the benefit received by the same, hence dampening the enthusiasm of the employer toward traditional job fairs.

A new approach has been implemented in Region 3 and 4. Single employers have requested, and received, a more intensified and individualized approach to recruiting a new generation of workers. The concept works in this manner: First of all, the job fairs are hosted at an Iowa Workforce site or a location close to a Workforce center. Extensive media coverage is provided ahead of the event by Iowa Workforce Development. Focused and concentrated attention to a single employer has paid huge dividends, generating larger numbers of more qualified applicants. Recent successes include Christensen Farms of Sleepy Eye, Minnesota which recently interviewed 18 applicants at the Estherville Workforce Center. Green Plains Renewable Energy (GPRE) of Superior, Iowa also interviewed 80 applicants at the same Workforce Center. The Algona, Iowa office hosted some 40 applicants for the Lakota, Iowa Global Ethanol plant. These job fairs were advertised throughout northern Iowa and southern Minnesota. The job fair employer participants were well pleased with the services and “tailor made” job fair services provided by Iowa Workforce Development.

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